'Sticky objects' and pathways to well-being and resilience: teacher understandings of and practices in positive psychology in their classrooms

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About the authors

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Abstract

Teaching is an emotional business. Although negative emotions have been extensively studied, issues of teacher well-being and positive emotions are under-researched. Consequently, this study investigates teacher perspectives on their working lives, using positive psychology, exploratory practice and 'sticky objects' (objects that attract and retain emotional resonances) as theoretical and methodological lenses for data generation, analysis and theory building.

This qualitative study involved 12 participants (seven from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and five from the United Kingdom) who were asked to use Diaro (a mobile app) to photograph objects in their daily lives which conveyed emotions and write accompanying brief explanations. Follow-up interviews provided deeper insights into their choices, explaining/amplifying the emotions that 'stick' to the selected objects. Three overarching themes emerged: the personal and interpersonal (care of self, of colleagues and of students); the pedagogical (student progress and creating/using materials); and the environmental (institutions, the weather and the wider political situation). The data gives a rounded picture of the lived experiences of teachers teaching English for academic purposes in different contexts.

Findings indicate that teachers care deeply about their professional responsibilities as educators. They are considerably affected by interpersonal relationships between colleagues, as well as teacher–student relations and the progress (or otherwise) of their students. As the field begins to recognise the need for research into teacher well-being as a contributor to resilience, the related areas of exploratory practice (with its focus on 'quality of life') and positive psychology afford new possibilities for theorising the daily practice of language teachers in higher education.

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1

Introduction

Teacher emotions are central to understanding classroom language learning, since they affect the motivation, health and well-being of all those involved. However, in recent years an increase in emotional exhaustion, even burnout, of teachers has been observed, indicating the power of teacher emotions affecting the life of the classroom and the persons (learners and teachers) operating within. The study of teacher emotion is therefore of vital importance in understanding classroom language pedagogy, and in charting teachers navigating their professional development through often difficult circumstances.

For some years, it has been clear that classroom language learning and teaching involves more than cognition (Arnold, 1999; Kramsch, 2009), with emotions contributing to the personal/pedagogical experiences of practitioners. Until recently, the focus has been on language learning as a site of struggle (e.g. Ellis, 2001; Kinginger, 2004), with extensive research into the negative aspects of affect, and attempts to eliminate these. Yet, as Mercer and Kostoulas (2018) note, analysis of *teacher* emotions, with particular emphasis on positive psychology, has hitherto been missing from the debate. This interest links directly to the principle of prioritising 'quality of life' as conceptualised in exploratory practice (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2017, 2019). Quality of life is here viewed as not merely general happiness, but rather a textured and multilayered experience which encompasses striving as well as joy. The principles of exploratory practice emphasise working collegially to understand classroom language learning and teaching. As such, exploratory practice is a useful conduit for researching the significance of positive emotions in language teacher education and continuing professional development (CPD).

Likewise, 'well-being' can be conceptualised as living a good life and links to the notion of quality of life outlined above. Seligman (2011) captures this in his term 'flourish', indicating a perspective on well-being that encompasses not only happiness and pleasure, but also meaningful engagement and moral value. The factors of well-being for Seligman are encapsulated in the PERMA framework, which we detail in the following section.

Resilience can be broadly defined as the capacity to withstand and recover from stress or adverse happenings. Earlier psychological research conceptualised resilience as an individual trait, but later understandings have moved beyond this view, seeing it as dynamic and emergent from a complex system. Within second language learning and teaching (SLLT) research, the notion of teacher resilience has been theorised as an 'emergent process of psychological growth' arising from a resilience system comprising inner strengths, external support and learned strategies (Kostoulas & Lämmerer, 2018: 251). Hiver (2018: 235) views teacher resilience as a 'dynamic process within a given context. [It] encompasses teachers' sense of purpose, entails meaningful action and participation, and is shaped by the interaction of personal and social dimensions.'

Resilience has been criticised anecdotally as a means for unscrupulous employers to further exploit exhausted workers. This misapplication is rejected here. Instead the study explores the potential for renewal and resistance that deep resilience affords teachers struggling with heavy workloads and conflicting institutional/educational demands, often under precarious contractual conditions.

The project aims to develop understanding of the role positive emotions play in supporting well-being and resilience of language teachers in the stressful environment of higher education institutions (HEIs). It spans two apparently disparate cultures in two settings teaching English for academic purposes (EAP), encompassing commonalities as well as differences across the field. The use of Ahmed's (2004) notion of 'sticky objects', i.e. objects that attract and convey emotions attributed by individual and collective experience, enables a detailed analysis of what helps teachers to draw on their own resources to survive and thrive in their work, and provides insights into what institutions, managers and teachers can do to promote well-being.

2

Literature review

2.1 Teaching is an emotional and embodied social practice

The literature on the nature of emotions makes a distinction between emotions and mood or general affect. Emotions are a subset of affect and are 'multicomponent response tendencies that unfold over a relatively short space of time' (Fredrickson, 2001), differing to affect in what they are about, timeframe and dimensions of operation. Emotions relate to specific objects and circumstances (Schutz et al., 2006); they are more transitory than mood and relate to more discrete categories of feeling (e.g. pride, anger, joy, disgust). Emotions are also theorised as 'embodied', emerging from language and interaction and dynamic in nature (Zembylas, 2005). In Benesch's words, emotions 'are not static, but move and stick' (2012: 34). This relates directly to Ahmed's (2004) notion of sticky objects, as elucidated below.

Despite the role of teacher emotions in educational processes being well-documented (e.g. Hargreaves, 1998; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), specific research focus on teacher emotion has only recently come to the fore. There is evidence for the impact of teacher emotion on learner outcomes, teacher identity development, classroom management, and the implementation of change (Chen, 2016). Teacher emotion inventories have shown joy as the most frequently experienced emotion in primary teachers, with positive emotions arising from classroom and social interaction. Meanwhile, negative emotions from institutional policies and changes and work–life imbalances are often reported (Chen, 2016). Despite this intriguing work, there is as yet scant information on emotions of teachers working in universities, particularly those teaching EAP and preparing students for their academic studies.

Teacher education is crucial for successful language learning and teaching, but as Wright (2005) notes, research in this area is frequently reduced to surface-level observations and 'quick-fix' solutions which do not solve the problem. In contrast, exploratory practice (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2015, 2017) aims for deep understanding of the complexities of the language classroom, the kind of 'deeply contextual' work that Zeichner and Noffke (2001: 315) advocate. Exploratory practice's philosophical framework of principles includes attention to quality of life, working for understanding, working collegially and working for mutual development. This challenges the prevalent deficit model (Breen, 2006) in education, and links to the ideas underpinning positive psychology.

2.2 Focusing on the positive

Gkonou and Mercer (2017) investigated the role of social and emotional intelligence within teachers' actual classroom practices, finding that English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers score highly for both. They argue for the necessity of an added interpersonal dimension to teacher training and education curricula, stressing that these are skills which teachers can improve at any point in their practice.

Although emotion has figured in second language acquisition (SLA) research as part of the individual differences research agenda (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), the emphasis has until recently been on the influence of negative emotions on student learning. A more positive focus has arisen in recent years, particularly with work on positive psychology in SLA (MacIntyre et al., 2016), taking its cue from Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). One of the major concerns of this movement is how a more positive life can be achieved (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Frameworks have been used both as impetus to practical action and methods for investigation. For example, Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework encompasses **P**ositive emotions, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, **M**eaning and **A**ccomplishments. Meanwhile, Oxford (2016) argues that her EMPATHICS framework extends Seligman's work, making it more appropriate for investigating SLLT contexts. Oxford recognises the nature of emotion as a dynamic, complex system, and posits the components of **E**mpathy, **M**otivation, **P**erseverance and resilience, **A**gency and autonomy, notions of change over **T**ime, **H**abits of mind, varied **I**ntelligences, **C**haracter strengths, and **S**elf factors.

The positive psychology movement also promotes the benefits of positive emotions in learning. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001) contends that experience of positive emotions broadens out the 'thought–action repertoires' of learners, enables them to build enduring personal resources and leads to the increase of resilience and transformation of self. Such work has been developed within SLA (e.g. MacIntyre et al., 2016; Dewaele et al., 2019) with similar arguments made for the benefits bestowed. A key piece of research (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016) investigating learner anxiety and enjoyment of second language learning indicates that these are separate constructs, not two sides of the same coin. We need to consider the positive as more than simply the absence of the negative, and consciously work towards this in classrooms. Teacher actions and their framings of emotion are central to this process.

2.3 Sticky objects and emotions

Drawing on the work of Ahmed (2004; 2010), Benesch (2012) introduces into the realm of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) research the notion of sticky objects. Both researchers argue that there are objects to which emotions particularly adhere, and which in turn attract other sets of emotions, thus providing a particularly tangible way to highlight and explore the role of emotions in teaching. Although Ahmed's work includes linguistic items, names, phrases and concepts as sticky objects, Benesch chooses concrete objects (cell phone and dictionary) as the focus of her research. These aspects are of particular interest, since they bring new dimensions to the study of the lived experience of teachers. In looking more closely at how teachers describe their emotional experiences, we can understand more fully the complexity of these sticky objects and their impact on teachers' well-being and emotional lives. Additionally, analysis of the teachers' choices of object and their discourses about their teaching experiences allows us to access understandings of the 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979) within their workplaces: what teachers are allowed to or expected to value in their teaching. Teachers provide a sense of their underlying values, priorities and 'taken-for-granted' understandings in relation to their emotional teaching lives.

In sum, the field is experiencing an 'emotional turn', as the importance of emotions in language pedagogy becomes clear. Yet little is known about what teachers themselves think of their everyday classroom lives, and less is known about how teachers use sticky objects to positively connote their way through the difficulties of their daily experiences. Consequently, this current research project aims to probe teacher conceptions of the emotional life of their profession, with particular emphasis on the positive as a way of understanding what contributes to teacher well-being and resilience in the face of considerable daily challenges.

3

Context

We were particularly interested in examining how these issues manifested in two distinctive HEIs: one in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the other in the UK. These two settings represent the two 'arms' of EAP: the former where teachers and learners largely share the same language and (institutional/national/educational) culture, and the latter where students are 'international incomers' needing to access the invisible rules of the new (academic/national/local) culture. Teaching EAP is a large, influential and growing field (Hyland, 2006; Wingate, 2015), but stressful and conflicted. It is a high-stakes endeavour for students themselves and for the governments that fund them, with large numbers of teachers employed to teach academic skills as well as language. It is crucial, therefore, to understand the factors affecting teacher well-being and resilience in this field.

In the UK, the precarious nature of many teaching contracts in EAP settings means that these may be contexts where greater focus on the positive is needed. Teachers work with international students who are dealing with multiple transitions (cultural, educational, linguistic) and enduring distance from usual support networks such as family and friends. Consequently, teachers often perform the 'emotion labour' (Hochschild, 1979) of supporting students as an integral part of their jobs. Meanwhile, in KSA, the classroom is often portrayed as a hierarchical space, with authoritarian teacher behaviours and consequent poor teacher–student relationships (Alrabai, 2016; Elyas & Picard, 2010, 2012). Lack of adequate teacher training and development has resulted in demotivated and disengaged learners,

despite the teachers' acknowledged desires for improvement (see Al-Seghayer, 2014). Although there are many differences between the two settings, there are commonalities in the emotional and psychological strains reported by teachers anecdotally. This begs for a detailed analysis of the possible contributions of positive psychology to EAP teachers' lives.

3.1 The research sites

The Saudi university in the study is the main campus of a large HEI (18,000 students) in the west of Saudi Arabia. English language institute staff supervise teaching the preparatory year students (9,000 female students), with a staff of about 200 Saudi and international teachers in the female section. It is typical of many such institutes in HEIs in non-anglophone settings.

The UK university is a medium-sized British HEI (20,000 students, of whom around 3,000 are international). The EFL section provides pre-sessional and in-sessional EAP, as well as English and study skills teaching for the International Foundation Year. The unit employs approximately 20 members of part-time and full-time teaching and management staff. It is typical of many such units in HEIs in English-speaking countries.

4

Methodology

The project adopted a case study approach (Stake, 2005), collecting a range of qualitative data from 12 participants in the two HEIs outlined above. Sticky objects (Ahmed, 2004; Benesch, 2012) were used as a heuristic device for emotion diaries (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003: 335), in combination with follow-up interviews, to explore teachers' understandings of positive emotions and well-being in their classroom practices. Probing teachers' personally selected examples of sticky objects allowed a focus on concrete aspects of teachers' lived experience, drawing together actual practice, thinking and feeling. The aim was to capture the specificity of emotional engagement by teachers in their classroom lives. The use of emotion diaries allowed for an immediate and day-to-day study of emotional experience and emotional effort, rather than teachers' retrospective recall of the emotionally important.

Following a pilot study to refine data collection procedures, the main study involved seven Saudi teachers and five UK teachers keeping positive emotion diaries over a month. The instructions for the diaries asked participants to make a daily entry on the online diary app Diaro (Benson, 2018) including a photograph of a positively connoted sticky object representing their daily emotion experiences, and some commentary about that object. This multimodal approach to data generation afforded a richer and more nuanced understanding of the emotional impact of the selected objects.

Teachers were recruited through email, text messages, word-of-mouth and, in the UK, a CPD workshop. Full ethical approval from the universities involved was gained before the start of data collection. Participation was voluntary, pseudonyms were used, and data was carefully protected. Participants were specifically asked not to photograph other people as objects. Data collection was conducted in English: participants in KSA were given a choice of using English or Arabic, with all voluntarily choosing English, with occasional Arabic, for diary entries and interviews. Although this was not the Saudi teachers' first language, it seems they felt that writing and talking about their teaching lives in English allowed sufficient freedom of expression, and may have offered the additional benefit of affording further practice in the language.

After the diary stage, follow-up interviews with each participant provided greater exploration of the emotions and objects recorded. The interviews lasted 40 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded, then transcribed. Diary entries, photographs and interview data were coded and analysed for key themes using the qualitative data analysis programme NVivo. The coding and analysis of each dataset were completed separately by individual researchers in-country, with regular comparison of codes arising and interpretations. External checking of coding and analysis was provided by a third researcher to aid consistency of analysis across the datasets. Analysis aimed to reach a balance between aspects of data which were unique and idiosyncratic as well as searching for commonalities (Stake, 2005), thus creating a detailed, nuanced picture of teacher emotional practice within the two contexts.

4.1 Participants

The seven Saudi participants were women teaching in a female-only university. Only Saudi nationals were considered to provide consistency of background, previous educational experiences and teacher training. UK participants were of mixed gender and nationality, with roughly similar years of teaching experience, reflecting the situations of many teachers in this context.

Table 1: Participants

Teacher	Gender	Teaching experience (years)	Qualification	Full-time/part-time	Nationality
Amal	Female	15	MA TESOL	Full-time	Saudi
Noura	Female	11	MA TESOL	Full-time	Saudi
Sara	Female	4	MA TESOL	Full-time	Saudi
Mona	Female	11	MA Linguistics	Full-time	Saudi
Nada	Female	5	MA Applied Linguistics	Full-time	Saudi
Wafa	Female	5	MA TESOL	Full-time	Saudi
Lina	Female	1.5	BA English; TESOL certificate	Full-time	Saudi
Karen	Female	20+	DELTA; MA TESOL	Part-time but long-term member of staff	UK
George	Male	20+	DELTA	Full-time; long-term member of staff	UK
Martin	Male	20+	DELTA; MA TESOL	Part-time then full-time; returning staff member	UK
Kira	Female	20+	MA TESOL	Full-time on summer school; returning staff member	European
Sandra	Female	3	MA TESOL	Full-time on summer school; new to the institution	UK (with bilingual Arabic heritage)

5

Findings

This section provides an overview of the data, showing the emotions most frequently mentioned and the range of objects recorded. We then present findings in four thematic areas, identified through the data analysis process. These are:

- personal and interpersonal relations
- pedagogic elements
- environment
- caveats.

For each theme, key sticky objects are presented alongside teacher diary entries and interview data to explain further the meanings and values associated with these objects. Diary entries are presented unedited to preserve participants' voices. Text in bold shows emphasis added by the researchers.

5.1 Overview of the data

There are 43 positive emotions identified by Saudi teachers and 26 by UK teachers, as shown in Table 2.

The Saudi teachers recorded 65 objects (including some repetitions), of which the most frequently mentioned were teaching materials, coffee, objects denoting social interaction with friends and students, and students' academic progress.

The UK teachers recorded 62 diary entries, 50 of which included objects. The most frequently mentioned items were teaching materials, technology resources, student work and university buildings.

Comparing the data between the two contexts indicates that the main emotions expressed are similar. Teachers frequently experience happiness, pride and enjoyment in their professional lives. There is also a sense of energy, job satisfaction and reward. The addition of humour in the UK data comes from one participant's entries and can be seen to serve a particular purpose. Teaching materials and student work feature highly in both lists. Coffee cups are regularly recorded by Saudi teachers, acting as a particular signifier of positive emotion. UK teachers use pictures of university buildings and offices as a cypher for relations with colleagues and students, highlighting certain causes of positive emotion.

The next stage of the findings considers these objects and their emotional meanings for teachers within thematic groupings.

Table 2: Emotions and sticky objects

Emotion	UK data (no. of objects)	KSA data (no. of objects)
Happiness	14	27
Pride	15	13
Job satisfaction/feeling useful/rewarding/worthiness	13	4
Humour	8	1
Surprise	2	8
Relaxing	5	3
Enjoyment	5	9
Positive energy	4	6
Lucky/blessed	3	6
Perseverance and achievement	3	-
Relief	3	-

5.2 Theme 1: Personal and interpersonal relations

Personal and interpersonal relationships are clearly evidenced as central to teachers' emotional well-being. Caring for others and experiencing care-of-self are prominent in the positive emotional experiences recorded. Examples include how teachers look after themselves, their relationships with colleagues, how they work to look after their students, and the psychological benefits they receive from relationships formed in the classroom.

5.2.1 Feeling close to students

The majority of sticky objects concern the positive emotions teachers experience from teacher–student relationships. Building strong relationships, sometimes a friendship, with students energises teachers and helps them enjoy teaching. Objects representing these close relationships include texts and emails from students and past students, meeting spaces for students and staff outside class, and shared social occasions (e.g. breakfast, pizza and an end-of-exams party).

Several teachers seemed unaware of how important good relations with their students were to their well-being, only discovering this through the process of diary-keeping. For example:

George: *I reflected on my teaching a bit, my relationship with students, most of it I think I realise that I, I … so both professionally and personally you realise that, well* **actually I'm a person that cares a lot about relationships. Most of my entries were on relationships, so that's what I discovered.**

The impact of students on teacher emotions was sometimes a revelation:

Sandra: *It's funny because I noticed that a lot of [content in the diary entries] was student related … yeah and funnily enough it all related to being liked.* **And I never thought I was that kind of person.** *I was like, you know, you don't care if people like you and you hear [inaudible] all the time, but then when I was reflecting, a lot of the things that made me feel good are, like, positive comments.*

Teachers worked hard to build personal relationships with their classes, talking about their interests and sharing social time inside and outside class. For example, Wafa records a picture of pizzas, representing herself and her students socialising.

Wafa (diary): *After finishing the Mid Module Exam I brought pizza and surprised my students. They were so excited and grateful for me. I told them that you study and worked hard, so you need now to take a break and reward yourself. Of course, I joined them and we talked about our life and some of their interests. I felt so great because I was able to know more about my students and what they are interested in.*

Similarly, Sandra records moments where her positive emotion derives from being closer to her students:

Object: Pavement in the rain

> Sandra (diary): *Today it rained heavily as I approached the end of my class. I waited in the building to wait for the rain to stop & a few students decided to wait with me too. We had a lovely, informal chat about life! I enjoyed getting to know them better & also felt great to know that they are happy to spend more time with me even after our class had finished.*

Mona continues her friendly relationships with some of her previous students who have graduated from the university. She explains her understanding of the place of close relationships within the teacher's role:

> Mona: *Like I have students who, I, I know their kids now [laughing], you know … My, my relationship with my students is more important than my relationship with my co-workers. I'm there for them. I'm not there for my co-worker [laughing]. My job is to serve the students.*

However, there are some risks in taking this approach. Noticeably, it is the two less-experienced teachers in each situation who spend more time socialising with their students. They both appear to feel some additional pressure from these relationships to support their students:

> Sandra: *We had a variety of workshops/mini-lessons on for students and mine got full first which made my day! I felt confident and reassured to know that students are continuing to sign up for my sessions and filling my list first every time. I believe that I feel it more strongly as a new teacher! It's motivating to know that students like to learn different skills with me.* **Now, I'm eager to stay and work till later to try and make my future sessions just as useful and up to their standards.**

Lina is beginning to realise these difficulties:

> Lina: *If I see a girl crying in class or if she doesn't feel well, my whole day is affected. I feel then ya haram (what a shame), how will she manage now or something.*

For this reason, she is setting some boundaries, explaining that having good relations with her students is a double-edged sword:

> Lina: *It's good and bad. It's good because until now I receive messages from the students and I sometimes hear comments. Sometimes they pass by my office and they're, like, thanks you and we miss you and everything. Err, this is the good part. The bad part is that, if for example I know that girl has a problem, I can't stop myself from thinking about later. Oh will she do fine in the exam? I'll be worried and stressed out. I can't sleep wa Allah (by God) before their writings because I know they'll be stressed.*

It appears that more-experienced teachers sense that some distance is needed. Karen reports finding the end of a course somewhat difficult, due to the students' emotional involvement with her:

> Karen: *I mean today was the last teaching day for my group. You know, they all say, 'Oh, this is the last lecture you are going to give us,' I say 'yes, I won't be lecturing to you anymore' you know … and they were like 'Ah.' You know and it was a bit of an awkward, wanting hugs and photos and things and I said 'No, I'll see you …'*

The balance between being liked as a teacher and building a strong, but professional, relationship which supports learning is a difficult one. Negotiating the most effective teacher–student relationship is a major piece of emotional work.

5.2.2 Teacher self-care

Protecting one's sense of self within the complex, highly charged setting of HEIs is a key part of the positive emotional work EAP teachers do. Many teachers do this by carving out time and space for themselves within the working day. A cup of coffee is a sticky object representing a moment of reward and self-care for many:

Amal (diary): *I feel that this is luxury for me to pass [a particular shop] and get a cup of coffee I mean that I feel this is a luxury so it makes me really happy.*

Sara explains that the happiness she felt when she had her coffee after checking the students' writing papers came from her feeling of achievement:

Interviewer: *What did you feel about this coffee cup? What does it mean for you?*

Sara: *It means like, I have accomplished … what I planned for the day. I have achieved my plan and* **now I have time to pamper myself** *with a cup of coffee, yes.*

Similarly, Wafa writes of the treat she gives herself at the end of a tiring day:

Wafa (diary): ***Rewarding my self after a long day class*** *is part of my success. I felt so great when I went to a restaurant and ordered something I really love. I ate Biryani and I enjoyed my time. I always like to reward my self especially after a hectic day. Of course it makes feel that " I DID IT".*

Finding time for oneself outside the demands of the university is another aspect of self-care. Karen indicates how she is careful to make this separation:

Karen: *My teaching life and my personal mindfulness, are separate … Because when I finish work I go to walk the dogs. My niece's dogs. And I forget, then, what's been going on during the day. Every teacher has problems with admin or miscommunication or whatever it is. So, I might have the good time in the classroom and then come out and have a bad time in some way. But then when I go home, I don't.* **I put aside the bad times and use that time for me.**

The aspect of teacher agency in making this careful separation is apparent, as it is in other entries where teachers show how they take control of negative emotional situations. For example, Kira makes changes in her approach:

Object: Corner of office

> Kira (diary): *I had too many problems to cope with last week. Today, I talked to the coordinator and shared my feelings, experiences in the last week. I also made suggestions as to how to change things which felt much better – a sense of achievement and progress.*

This relates to the self-aspect of well-being, but also overlaps with the relationship aspects in that the teacher was able to talk openly to her co-ordinator and improve her work situation.

One noticeable aspect of self-care concerns the use of humour. One teacher in particular (George) utilises humour as a way of protecting himself from some of the stresses of teaching and maintaining his sense of self within the institution. For example, George uses the image of Professor Wallofski (a clown character created by the British comedian and actor Max Wall, popular in the 1970s) as a folder illustration on virtual learning environment materials to help students to find materials more easily, but also to signify a deliberate counter-corporate stance by this teacher:
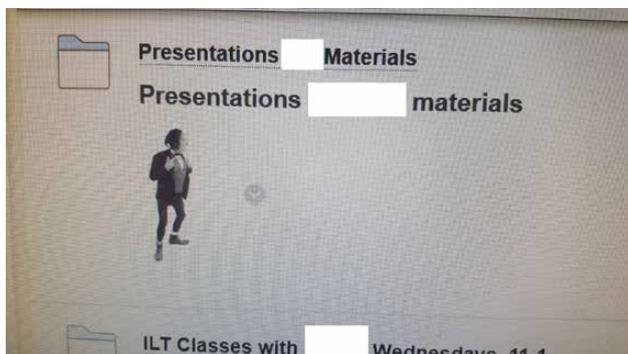
> George (diary): *Corporate brand ... max wall's dr wallofski character ... I hate corporatism really. No not totally ... but image in HE is out of control. Not sure where I fit in in the new image toolkits ... Hmmm So max wall. Dr something was the character lm googling it. Dr wallofski. Yup. Not sure he is the hard hitting academic sensitive to todays white heat industrehhh academic recruitment needs. But he helps my studrnts find stuff on blackboard. A little bit of quirkiness in the white heat of marketised HE. HA HA.*

George later expands on his reasons for using this image. Humour is there to engage the students, but also to allow him space to resist what he sees as negative aspects of higher education:

> George: *And I think the point about the 'Max Wall' thing was also trying to make the leaners have a laugh, so it's back to 'affect' again. It doesn't have to be all grim and corporate at this point. So it's a little bit of rebellion ... it adds a certain double hit to it. So that's why I included that ... Humour kind of exposes the vacuousness of that which you are up against and the lack of intellectual clout behind it, whilst at the same time I'm not just putting the images on for some bizarre joke, it genuinely is to allow people to find it quickly ... and to create this feeling of effect that not everything at university has to be grim and awful.*

Humour is an outlet for stress and a way of asserting identity for this teacher. In later feedback George indicated that he feels his sense of humour represents a peculiarly British way of dealing with stress.

5.2.3 Relationships with colleagues

Teachers' relationships with colleagues are a source of positive emotion in their daily professional lives. Very often this is captured in photographs of food and drink, indicating it is through this kind of social interaction that teachers recharge their well-being. As with self-care, cups of coffee are often recorded as representative of this aspect.

Nada notes the positive feeling when a colleague brings her a cup of coffee. Here, the sticky object of the coffee cup signifies much more than the hot drink; attached are feelings of care, generosity and pleasure:

> Nada (diary): *Today I have a long day ahead of me. I'm working on Mid-module schedules and i have a deadline by the end of the week. **A coffee break with my colleagues made me a bit more energetic and less stressed about the deadline.***

She highlighted the importance of the company she had when drinking her coffee:

> Nada: *It's a mood stabiliser [laughing] … so, it's not the coffee itself it's the **company** that I have around me. So, when I have my colleagues, which I'm in good relationship with, **it kind of makes me feel safe at work**, So that's what the cup of coffee represents because I can't take their pictures, so it was safer to take a picture of the cup of coffee.*

This sense of safety and care is echoed by Karen, who cites strong relationships with colleagues as her motivation to remain within the institution:

> Karen: *I've been to 12 different universities and I've come back here. Why have I come back here? … Because, I like it here and I like the people here. That's the key. The work is the [inaudible] work, I mean after 35 years of doing … teaching English, you can adapt to whatever work they want you to do, but you can't change the colleagues you work with … Yeah, they're like family.*

The shared sense of experience and purpose provides further positive benefits, as Wafa elucidates:

> Wafa: *For me it's very important to sit with my colleagues after classes, because … they are working at the same field and we know what kind of problems may occur. So, we can discuss **that because they are, I think, the only people that they can understand what I'm talking about.** So I can say, I have a problem in the class … and they start to, 'OK, we will give you **solution**, you have to do this, and this and this.' especially if they are … **experts** and they have been teaching for many years, so they know what's going on.*

Others write of experiencing support and positive reinforcement from colleagues over shared lunch breaks:

Object: Empty plates in a café

> Kira (diary): *I had a nice relaxing lunch with my colleagues at work today. During lunch, my coordinator told me not to worry about teaching or not teaching on the summer programme … To grow professionally sometimes all we need is to be surrounded by colleagues who make you believe in yourself. I feel lucky to be working in such supportive work environment.*

A shared social space helps in facilitating such meetings, as do shared break times, as Sara points out:

> Sara: *Yes, at the teacher lounge … we meet up about something, we, we learn from each other and we, like, lift each other. We motivate each other … so it was a good thing to start the morning chatting with her.*

Without the opportunity to meet and talk out of class or official meeting times, the building of collegial support and care can be missed.

5.3 Theme 2: Pedagogic aspects

The objects teachers record as positive emotions indicate which aspects of their pedagogies they value, and in turn what is more generally valued in the profession at large. Themes highlighted teachers' enjoyment in student progress, the nature of the teacher role in the classroom, student-centredness in materials creation and building effective classroom environments.

A large group of objects and diary entries indicate the pleasure and pride teachers take in seeing their students' achievements and progress in learning. Student progress is seen in exams, handwriting, blackboard assignments and making contributions in class. For example, Amal records a picture of her students writing their own names in English, saying she felt proud when seeing an improvement in their Latin alphabet handwriting:

> Amal: *I think any teacher would feel the same if you teach them the simplest thing and you feel that they picked up that they understood or started doing and improving that's an amazing feeling.*

The progress of even one student can make an impact, as Karen indicates in her first diary entry:
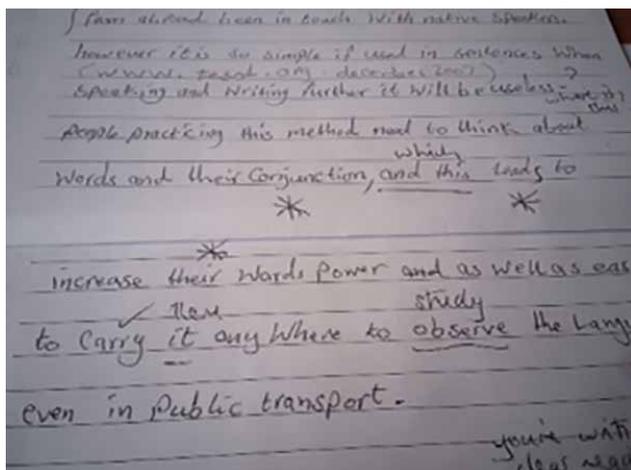
Karen (diary): *This was the only student who combined info together in her homework task. I felt positive as I realised she had not only understood the source she'd read but that she had taken responsibility for, and had advanced her own learning.*

Karen also records her pleasure in seeing individual students' growing independence:

Karen (diary): *A reticent student answered a question in class. After the class I asked her how she'd felt about it – she said she felt happy so I did too!*

Lightbulb moments are one of the drivers of positive emotion for teachers. Seeing learning in action is very powerful:

Kira (diary): *We played kahoot spelling game and I told them the rule i before e except c. They all looked amazed. One student told me he had always struggle spelling was quite happy to find out about the rule. His eyes were showing. I couldnt believe how such small detail could make a change in the learning process.*

She notes that it is the experience of shared learning which fuels the building of trust and stronger relationships between teachers and students:

Kira (diary): *When students start to learn, they start to trust the teacher. Trust makes learning easier!*

This element of trust denotes a strong connection between teacher and students, qualitatively different from the more social, friend-like relationships detailed in the previous section.

Some teachers feel positive when they work in a more equal relationship to their students. Karen frequently records entries relating to this aspect of her relationship with students:

Object: Quotation from student written up on the whiteboard

Karen (diary): *I elicited a sentence from a student and put it on whiteboard (see photo) … it took the onus off me as all-knowing teacher to one of guide – which I enjoy.*

When asked to elaborate, Karen explained her pleasure in this aspect of her teaching as something political:

Karen: *You're not like family, but you know, I try to, to be on the same level as they are rather than being above them because I'm not above them and nobody is above anybody, a very socialist classroom.*

One teacher (George) explicitly avoids authoritarianism. One key entry in this regard relates to his approach to delivering a mandatory lesson about bullying:
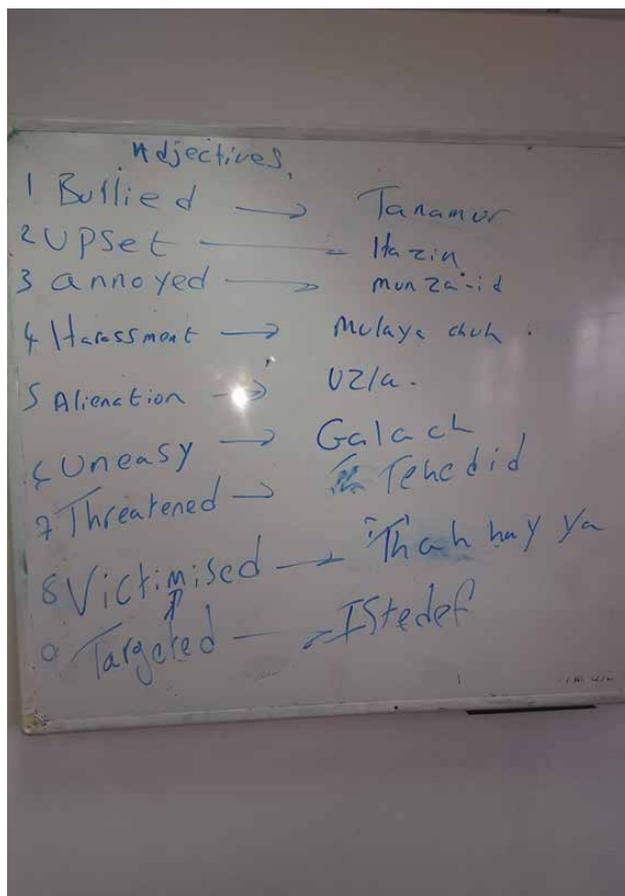
George (diary): *Ilt session… on 'bullying'. 3 line whip … 'do this …' teacher gets down as a student. Equal playing field … English teachers … 'learn this … it will help'. So here I am … as the student. Teach ME foundation studes. Seems to work … they are arguing about the Arabic version. Now all I have to do is pronounce this stuff. Serious point … how else to cover 'heavy stuff' on bullying … and very humbling. Wanna talk to lang students??? Try being one …*

He seems to feel that the only way to teach this lesson is to deliberately become a student and get the students to teach him the vocabulary around bullying in Arabic. This is one of several instances in which George showed his active rejection of more authoritarian approaches to a traditional teacher role.

The sense of a more equal relationship with students arises too in several entries recording materials. These are often connected with the notion of student-centred teaching: materials which are made by teachers for particular groups of students bring positive emotion, since teachers feel they are fulfilling a 'good teacher' role and working for their students, as both Martin and George indicate:

Object: Hat with laminated cards of presentation topics

Martin (diary): *Activity prepared for my advanced level group – they picked a topic from the hat and talked for two minutes. This worked and it challenged them – … self-made materials are so much better …*

Object: Laminated cards with song words created from what the students were singing in class
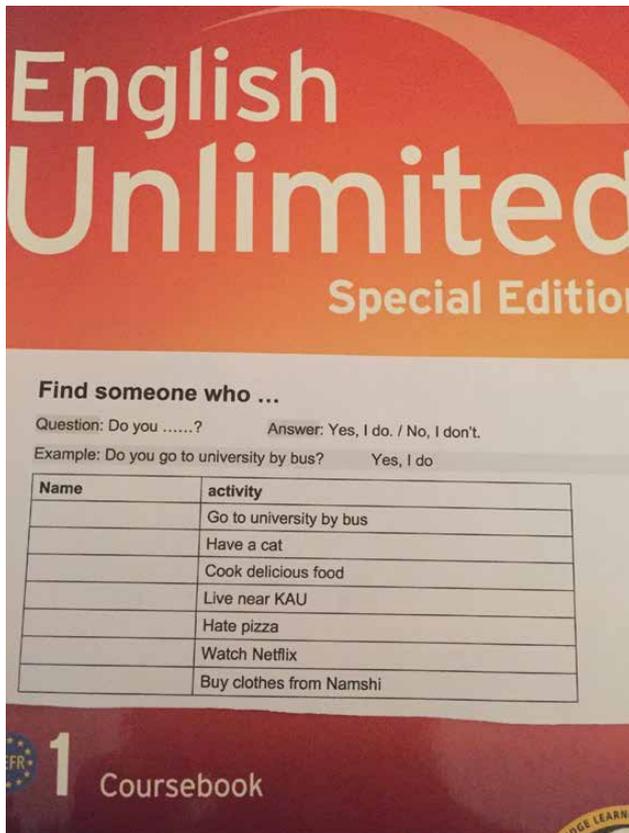
George (diary): *Ad hoc Kahoots: Made a drag drop kahoot on Bohemian Rhapsody linking to you tube sound after class sang it back to me on thursday. 1 worksheet was about Galileo.. ………. . I think 1 thing teachers need to do is play to the gallery from time to time to make the learner realise their centrality to the lessons.*

George elaborated his reasons for creating this set of materials and his feelings about them:

George: *I put that one in there to symbolise spontaneity. Because I didn't know they were going to start singing Bohemian Rhapsody. I couldn't believe it when they did … And then I thought:* **'Oh, I'm going to do something about that, that's funny, that will seize on what they've done.'** *And that's what I like about the job. Because you've got your syllabus, you've got your scheme of work. You've got your this that, this that.* **It is nice sometimes to just do stuff 'because'.** *Not, and make that,* **'because' help them. So it's not just tomfoolery. But you, you then can link … do your job, have a laugh, link to something they've done, that they're interested in and link to an event that happened that was quite funny.**

Creating materials allows this teacher to show a particular kind of care for his students; their interests are noticed, and shared humour is invoked and used in the service of learning. George conforms to 'feeling rules' in that the work he carries out shows his effort to be 'student-centred' and to build his relationship with students.

For Saudi teachers, who do not have the same opportunity to develop substantive classroom materials, other forms of creative pedagogy are apparent. They prioritise developing strong group dynamics and classroom cultures which assist learning, through the use of motivational materials and the building of shared group experiences. Nada, for example, records an icebreaker activity as her first sticky object.

Building positive group dynamics means the classroom becomes a place of shared enjoyment and laughter, but also aids learning, as these teachers indicate:

> Wafa: *I try to be very close friend for them, showing them that teaching is not something scary … we can be friends. We can talk, communicate … to enhance their language as well.*

> Mona: *I have to, like, relate – make them relate so they can let loose in the class and be comfortable so they can actually absorb what I am saying.*

For Sara a particular incident illustrates her approach:

> Sara: *So, there was a problem with projector. It kept turning the screen off and on, and I tried to recognise the problem but didn't know where exactly it was. After checking the cable over and over again, with no clue if it really was from the cable. **I started a spooky story that there is a ghost who is bored with class and he is teasing me by doing this** and I was talking to him every time the screen was off, so he turn it on again. It was very cute seeing all those faces burst in laughter every time they hear me talking to the unseen ghost. **It made me happy and a class full of laughers means a successful class for me.***

This is a good example of a teacher working positively to turn a classroom problem into a shared class story, which she can return to in the future, building group identity and positive class dynamics.

Nada (diary): *Today was my first day teaching. I was nervous because I wasn't sure if my students will come. 30/35 students came and they were all willing to participate and follow instructions clearly even though some of them are above level. I adapted an icebreaker to suit students' interests. I was glad that they were fully engaged with the material.*

Sara jokes about common cultural events to create an enjoyable and involving classroom environment:

> Sara: *Sometimes I switch to Arabic to talk about like, funny stuff, I will bring something from the social media I can impersonate, like other people. I change my voice. I took, like, some storytelling classes. So, they will get surprised and then they'll say 'OK, the teacher is doing this so why don't we'. So I try to make positive and fun experience for them.*

5.4 Theme 3: Environment

This theme considers the environmental aspects of positive emotions in teachers' lives. Many of the objects and entries here relate to the institutional setting, coming partly from the physical facilities, but also from the institutional culture.

Teachers record resources and facilities provided by the institution as positively connoted objects. These are specific to particular tasks (for example, George writes about microphones for students, audio-equipment for producing listening materials) and infrastructure (e.g. quiet teacher offices, clean toilets, well-equipped classrooms, sports facilities and subsidised canteens).

For example, Amal discusses her happiness in having a spacious classroom with big windows:

Amal: *It's a clean classroom with a nice scene what could a teacher ask more. This is perfect for any teacher I think – a clean classroom and a lovely scenery, I mean that is perfect.*

Mona recorded a photograph of her office:

Mona (diary): *Today was a very long day. We had to stay extra hours for the students who missed the writing exam. It is a blessing to have a quiet office to think and work.*

Martin valued the sports facilities at the university:

Martin (diary, no object): *It's a sunny day, my afternoon class has been replaced by a student party as it's Kuwaiti national day, and i've just had a really good session in the University gym – a gym that is subsidised for me as a staff member.*

Teachers record that they feel positive when institutions take actions to show that they are valued. Mona's story shows the strong positive impact that such active valuing can have. The sticky object is a door – mysterious to the casual observer, but 'gold' for the teacher:


Mona (diary): *sometimes it's nice to use perks. I always was daunted by the long lines for coffee. I would satisfy my hunger by packing a lunch or grabbing something from the vending machine. Today I told a teacher, I'm really starving and the lines are a mile long. She said don't you know you can use the side door? I went very timidly and asked the students not wanting to really cut in. But they said Miss go through there. You have a class.* **With their blessing I went and it's like I discovered gold. Funny how small things have an impact.**

A further element of the institutional context is the relationship between management and the teachers. Lina writes of sharing personal family moments with her co-ordinator:

Lina (diary, no object): *Today I went to sign my evaluation with my coordinator. My previous coordinator shares the office with her and she was extra happy to see me that day more than usual. She gave me chocolate in celebration of her daughter giving birth to a new born. I like her a lot as she is one of the best people I worked with and met here, so I was glad that she shared that happy moment with me.*

There seems to be a genuine personal connection between co-ordinator and teachers, going beyond managerial roles.

Objects concerning personal relationships with co-ordinators and local management seemed more prevalent in the UK data, where there are expressions of a strong sense of belonging and of collegiality. Teachers recorded objects showing a culture of value of their efforts and supportive management. For example, Sandra recorded a closed diary as her sticky object after attending a meeting in which she wasn't required to take any notes.
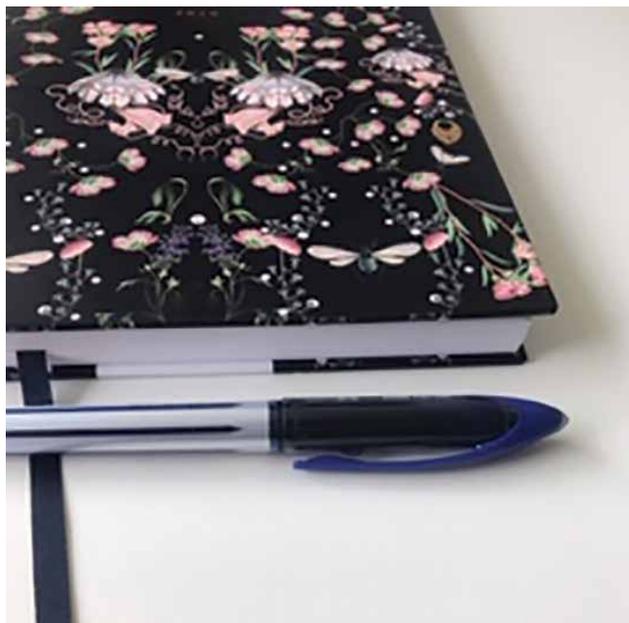
Sandra (diary): *I attended our weekly staff meeting as usual today but to my surprise it was significantly shorter than the usual (which would make anyone's day).* **The point I wanted to write about is the content of that meeting, we were literally only invited to be thanked!** *I felt extremely appreciated as it is always good to know you're on the right track. The manager only took a couple of minutes to utter the words of appreciation but the effects seem to be long-lasting.*

In the UK context having flexibility and autonomy in ways of working is of great importance to the teachers:

Kira (diary, no object): *Flexibility and Acceptance: Here, there is a different work environment compared to other places I worked in and in a way I remembered the benefits of it again today. There is more flexibility with regards to what you do in class and you are not expected to strictly follow the program which initially I found hard as I had gotten used to working in places where almost everything was prescribed for you. It feels good to have been given some freedom!*

This is echoed by Martin, who cites the value he places on having a voice in the institution and feeling part of a team:

Martin: *I've got much more of a sense of belonging back at [name of university] and input and being part of the process. When you do pre-sessionals, it's great, you work for prestigious places like [university name] or [university name], but you're aware and they're aware that in three months' time you're going to go … Whereas, you know [here] I feel that, you know, I, my voice would be listened to if I had a strong opinion about something.*

Both sets of teachers write about the impact of resources and facilities. This is possibly more prevalent in the Saudi context, while the UK data seems to indicate that local institutional culture at the level of the department (rather than university) has the greatest impact on teachers. Local actions and ways of working are what teachers record: being appreciated on a personal level, shared social time, being thanked in person and having flexibility and autonomy in their practice are key for teachers. The benefits of good infrastructure are acknowledged, but do not feature as highly or with such impact as the more social and relational elements.

Broader elements of the environment which influence teacher emotions are natural spaces and the weather. Views from classrooms and calm spaces to relax in are recorded by teachers as positive. The weather is also a sticky object, promoting relaxation, energy and refreshment. In the UK it is sunny weather:

Object: Evening sky

> Sandra (diary): *There were no classes today which meant a more relaxed day at work. I managed to leave much earlier than usual which meant that I enjoyed the sun and waited for the sun to set with a friend. It felt great to end the week on a high, I felt relaxed and rewarded after a stressful week.*

In contrast, several Saudi teachers mentioned rain as a positive object. Sara wrote that rain 'lifted up my soul and filled me with joy', while Noura's entry reads:

> Noura (diary): *Today on the way to class it was a rainy day that gave me positive energy to start the day fresh just like the smell of the rain drops. So in love with this weather, boost of energy and inner peace.*

The environment goes beyond the immediate/ physical, to encompass the political context. Saudi teachers recorded their pleasure at the political changes they perceive happening in the country; the lifting of the ban on female driving and the widening of educational opportunities. Mona writes that she thought it was 'amazing' to see teachers using their own cars. Amal felt happy when she saw teachers and students park their own cars:

> Amal (diary): *As I was getting out of my car this morning, I noticed some teachers and students parking their cars and walking towards the University gates. It was such a happy moment because there was a point where I thought this would never happen and women would not be able to drive.*

Amal photographed a banner for a college event including female engineering students. She was thrilled:

> Amal: *Because I remember when I first started working at [name of institution] there wasn't an engineering faculty for girls, so also this to have them actually participate in such event, we moved from having an engineering faculty for girls to the participating in activities and events – it, that also makes me happy like also* **resembles baby steps towards modern world.**

In contrast, some UK teachers' positive emotions arise from their resistance to their perceptions of wider political, societal and institutional cultures which position international students as deficient and problematic. Teachers explicitly championed their causes and corrected perceptions of their abilities:

> George: *And then the reason I get a buzz is because you're, from my point of view righting a wrong, because people say, 'oh it's this thing it's incredibly difficult, or there is a lot made of it so you can't do that. Therefore, if you can't do that there is something wrong with you.' …. Then you get over this hurdle and they [students] do it and you think, great because this false wall that has been laying against them 'you can't do this therefore you are deficient' has been removed.*

In both these settings there is a sense of teachers connecting to something meaningful beyond themselves in their everyday reactions.

5.5 Theme 4: Caveats

Quality of life and well-being encompass the rich variety of life, including ups and downs. Thus, inevitably, there were several entries recognising that there was nothing positive to record. Notably, Kira captures a blurred picture of her hand, explaining the image thus:

Kira (diary): *I can't find anything positive to write. Things are not going well… It is very demotivating… […]… Nothing positive today!*

This is to be expected in recording the day-to-day realities of working life. Permanent positivity could lead to a Pollyanna-like unreality; acknowledging the fluctuations of life signifies sanity. Nevertheless, Kira later explained that the writing of this diary entry became itself a positive action with a positive emotional outcome:

> Kira: *Because I started to benefit from writing day and I thought, OK, why am I going to skip today? Because it's part of my day and I'm not feeling good. I'm trying to think about something that's gone positive and I don't …* **even if there was something I can't find it because I'm not feeling good, why don't I be realistic and just carry on with my habit** *… I felt good about it. I was like, OK, so I can still express myself. I can still express myself, so maybe that was the good thing about it.*

It is important to acknowledge that positive emotions are not always easy to find in teaching contexts. There are undeniable difficulties, struggles and tensions which exist within educational institutions. However, the ability to reframe even the act of recording this negativity indicates a particular spirit of resilience in this teacher.

6

Discussion

The themes detailed above show the multilayered nature of the EAP teachers' emotional lives within complex, challenging professional situations. There are shared aspects of positive emotion across both contexts in the study. Caring relationships, where people are recognised as individuals, are vital. Well-being and energy arise from these relationships emanating from a sense of mutual development (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2017). Student progress provokes pride and joy for teachers and helps learners to build trust in their teachers. Developing effective materials and learning environments for students allows for pleasure in creativity and job satisfaction in caring for students. Beyond the classroom, the institution, often at a local level, has a strong role in supporting teachers' valuing of self. Additionally, teachers' own self-care and protection of self-concept is foundational in their well-being.

There are nuanced differences in how these elements are enacted in the two HEIs. In both there is a sense of warm regard and concern for students. The monolingual, monocultural setting of KSA perhaps generates more protective feelings from teachers towards students; the relationships predicated on 'close service' to learners. The nature of the UK EAP context means that as teachers work to support students' transitions into a new linguistic and cultural setting, they are concerned to promote equal relationships and student independence. They also act as champions for international students in the face of what may be perceived to be deficit institutional and societal positioning. A particular kind of student-centred approach here positions the teachers as less authoritarian, and as developers of materials acknowledging student needs and interests as key to learning.

Across the findings certain issues prompt further consideration in relation to the role of positive emotion in teaching.

The centrality of teacher–student relationships to teacher positive emotion raises questions about the nature of 'emotion labour' (Hochschild, 1979) in EAP settings. For other professions (e.g. service industries) emotion labour is seen as a negative burden, requiring employees to perform particular emotions in interaction with customers. The data indicates, however, the strongly positive benefits which teachers gain from shared enjoyment and good relationships with their students. This contrasts with work by King and Ng (2018), whose consideration of teacher–student interaction showed only negative teacher emotions arising. Here the emotional engagement by teachers is not one-way, and, although teachers understand something of the potential dangers, they enter willingly into this exchange.

An added layer in emotional positivity comes from seeing the benefit of these relationships in the service of learning. Shared stories, humour from personalised materials or class jokes, and positive class experiences in general are prized for the positive emotion, and also for how these elements support students' motivation, trust and engagement. Teachers feel good about building this sort of environment and recognising consequent student progress. Yet, it is not easy to determine how to maintain the most beneficial teacher–student relationships. The shifting sands of classroom emotions are tricky to navigate for the best learning outcomes, and this represents a major part of emotion labour for teachers.

Interestingly, the two less-experienced teachers frequently reported positive emotion through direct social engagement with students. Avoiding unhealthy dependency, both began to adjust this approach. More experienced teachers describe their positive relationships with students as professional and boundaried. Consequently, the developments and shifts over time of positive emotional classroom connections require greater investigation.

Social relationships with colleagues are key in maintaining well-being. How institutions can work to support and develop these aspects is an important question. HEIs wishing to become more positive institutions (Seldon & Martin, 2017) need to facilitate these relationships through the provision of time (shared breaks) and space (teacher lounges, kitchens, workstations). Institutions also need to work explicitly to show teachers how they are valued. Recognising teachers as individuals, praising their skills, thanking them for service, and providing facilities and signals

of value are important. The data indicates that recognition of teachers tends to be at a local, impromptu, departmental level, rather than across the institution, suggesting there is a need for more far-reaching and systematic reward/appreciation of teachers. In many UK universities the emphasis on and recognition of research (rather than teaching), and the emphasis on academic subject groupings (rather than centralised language teaching centres), mean that EAP teachers' skills are often overlooked at higher levels. As Seligman (2011) suggests, working in an area where accomplishment is recognised is essential for 'good life'.

The solitary nature of much university teaching (solo teaching, closed classroom doors, little discussion of pedagogy) means that often success goes unnoticed. Thus, other means are sought to build and reinforce a sense of self as a good teacher. Students' favourable reactions and emotional connections are one source of feedback for teachers and one that is strongly felt. Similarly, the rewards of the 'luxury' of coffee breaks, time for oneself and other self-care acts are significant for teachers in this position. The rewards signify not so much a 'well done', but a strengthening of self-image as a good teacher, building resilience in the absence of other input.

Self-image is also implicated in other types of self-care seen in the data. Teaching involves performance of identity/ies. Where there is incongruence of classroom self and authentic self, teachers need to perform more emotional work to feel safe and flourish (Zembylas, 2003). Finding ways to explicitly signal personal values (e.g. challenging corporatisation of institutions, or promoting social justice) produces positive emotion because of teachers' ability to assert authentic identity in a complex professional context.

Teachers also self-care in the ways they choose to think about their teaching experiences. Sara, who reframed her bad experience with a faulty projector cable (above), models 'learned optimism' (Seligman, 2006), producing a positive for herself and the class as a whole. Taking part in the project itself provided teachers with the opportunity to notice the positive in their teaching on a regular basis. Several teachers mentioned how diary keeping allowed them to stay more positive, echoing 'gratitude diaries' recommended within positive psychology as part of good living (Petersen, 2006). For example:

> Karen: *And I think looking back over the entries, I sort of realised the, you know, there were high spots in the academic year, because, you know it's so stressful and lots of stress around you, it can overwhelm you but, looking back at it I thought*

> *'yeah, you know, that was good, that was good.' Small things that you get back each day are what you should be looking for … you should be looking for things … the reward that you get back from each day, from little things that you do.*

It is noteworthy that several of the teachers mentioned they have continued with the Diaro app, keeping up their positive focus on a daily basis.

Teacher emotions are influenced by more than the immediate happenings within classes or institutions. Events beyond these walls have an effect too. At one prosaic, but often undocumented, level, the weather is important. Positive emotional reactions to wider societal and political concerns (feeling good about increasing female independence and value in resistance to anti-foreigner feeling) indicate an important connection to meaning beyond oneself, one of the key factors in the PERMA framework (Seligman, 2011).

When working to understand well-being in classrooms, it is important not to sideline these elements. Benesch sees emotions as 'tools of resistance' (2018: 2), and Hanks (2017) sees classrooms as sites of struggle, while Breen challenges the notion that 'systems of bureaucratic surveillance will improve their students' performance' (2006: 207). Such matters are part of quality of life (Gieve & Miller, 2006; Hanks, 2019) and can generate the kind of agentive puzzled investigation that exploratory practice recommends, transcending older transmission models of education.

The study found that teachers do not have difficulty in recording positive elements in their lives. Keeping a diary helps them to focus on small things, building up memories over time, which combats the weariness of everyday stress. The project also enabled teachers to re-engage with their teaching: the focus on positively connoted sticky objects led to virtuous feedback loops, where students and teachers engaged in mutually beneficial activities. Teachers who felt good also helped their learners to learn, and this helped the teachers feel even better. Keeping the diaries helped the teachers to identify what they valued and thus increased their positive emotions. Taking part in the project also helped the teachers see how rewarding they found their (professional and boundaried) relationships with students, colleagues and managers. All this encouraged them to feel valued and part of a group with shared ideals and values. Finally, the project enabled teachers to focus on their accomplishments, recognise what they do well, and develop their strengths as professionals and as people.

7

Implications

The implications of this study concern individual teachers, institutions, and teacher education and CPD programmes. Surprisingly, they do not demand heavy financial burdens or complex systems of management: remembering to say a genuine 'thank you' for work completed, providing dedicated space for teachers to work and socialise, and providing dedicated time for professional relationship building may be sufficient to support well-being and resilience.

The study indicates areas in which teachers can work to build and maintain their positive emotions within their professional environment. Taking care of oneself through reward and time-out is important. Similarly, working to actively protect/promote one's authentic sense of self is equally vital in maintaining well-being. Noticing the positives in daily life seems to sustain teachers over longer periods and can be encouraged through the keeping of these types of emotion diaries using Diaro, which is quick and convenient. Thinking positively about one's teaching and reframing difficulties as positive are habits of mind that can be modelled and cultivated with practice.

Institutions need to enable positive relationships to flourish, by providing time, space and encouragement for teachers to work collegially. Therefore, institutions should recognise teacher strengths and show explicitly how they value teacher contributions and roles, with systematic rewards demonstrating how much teachers' work is genuinely valued.

Teacher education and development programmes have perhaps neglected teacher emotion. Teachers need to be supported to understand the complex emotional elements of their classroom, rather than seeking constantly to 'improve'. CPD programmes need to raise questions about the complexities of teacher emotion and its sources, and consider how teachers can manage these. Innovative forms of CPD, such as exploratory practice and positive psychology, which encourage practitioners to flourish within their classrooms are required. The development of understanding of teacher–student emotional connections over time should be supported via CPD, thus providing a structure of examining, understanding and progressing. Teachers need to be challenged to discuss critically the nature of relationships with students and how these can become the most beneficial for learning. Teacher education programmes could provide frameworks for consideration of emotional working and support teachers to investigate their own realities through exploratory practice and classroom research.

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